

**“How can anyone not love
[the New Israel Fund]?”**

- David Grossman

**New Israel Fund of Canada
הקרן החדשה לישראל
Annual Report 2016**

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הקרן החדשה לישראל**

Board President's Message



New Israel Fund of Canada has much good news to celebrate from 2016, in a challenging time. And that good news is you. Each and every one of you who acts to translate your values into action, into a commitment to bettering Israeli society today, is a triumph for democracy and a demonstration of your personal commitment to a better Israel.

You have made a difference, enabled positive change, and improved lives. Whether it is creating affordable housing opportunities for low-income people, helping Sudanese asylum seekers obtain refugee status, or bringing together Palestinians and Israelis for leadership programs, our work, enabled by your generosity, is directly impacting Israeli society for the better on a day-to-day basis. You enable education, commit to human rights, empower women, and fight against poverty.

As a community of supporters in 2016, we made and continue to make a statement of our common values. We work together to bring to fruition our shared vision of an Israeli society as defined by its Declaration of Independence, and nourished, inspired and changed by the activism of its citizens—enabled by you.

You, our community of supporters and donors, are what allow us to translate our values into action. It is your commitment to a vision of a more just and equal Israeli society, and your courage to stand up for what is right, that empowers us and our Israeli partners to make change happen.

Thank you for joining us in working to make that vision a reality. Together we will be bold. Together, we will continue to be the good news that comes from a place of deep commitment and love for Israel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan Garson'.

Joan Garson, Outgoing President



Amy Block, President and Ben Murane, Executive Director

New Leadership at New Israel Fund of Canada

In November of 2017, the New Israel Fund of Canada underwent two exciting leadership changes. Two youthful, energetic faces have taken the lead.

Ben Murane joins us as our new Executive Director. Ben brings with him nine years of experience with NIF's U.S. branch, as well as twelve years of leadership on some of the most innovative projects at the intersection of Israel and social justice.

At the same time, Amy Block is our new President. Amy is an accomplished lawyer, a mother of two young children, and a deeply passionate leader for social justice in Israel.

This is a moment of energy for NIFC. Our new leadership represents the passion of the next generation of Jewish leaders in Canada and their commitment to Israel.

New Israel Fund of Canada

Our Mission

To uphold the vision of Israel's founders for a democratic society in which all citizens are treated as equals.

About Us

Since its founding in 1985, New Israel Fund of Canada (NIFC) has worked tirelessly alongside Canadians and Israelis who are advocating for civil and human rights, promoting religious tolerance and pluralism, and working to heal ruptures in Israel's social and economic fabric. NIFC-supported projects and organizations are at the forefront of Israel's advancement toward socio-political equality and inclusivity for all of its people, regardless of religion, race, gender, or national identity.

Building bridges between Canadian communities and Israeli organizations, NIFC supports on-the-ground Israeli advocacy through project funding, leadership development, organizational support, and coalition building.

Our Focus

We focus our efforts on five major areas:

- Women's rights
- Civil and human rights
- Religious pluralism and tolerance
- Social and economic justice
- Canadian outreach and education.



Women's Rights

Israel's Declaration of Independence ensures "complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants regardless of religion, race or sex." However, women in Israel face discriminatory practices that suppress their voice and power. Women of ethnic or religious minorities in particular experience disproportionately high rates of unemployment, poverty, and health challenges.

NIFC combats gender segregation, the exclusion of women from positions of leadership, and institutionalized wage gaps. By nurturing new leadership and educating Israelis about women's rights, NIFC is a pioneer in creating new, empowered roles for Israeli women at work, at home, and in the public sphere.

2016 Projects

- **NIF:** Civil Liberties Law Fellows
- **Shatil:** Building the capacity of Israel's Non-Profit Sector
- **Achoti:** Economic Advancement Programs for Marginalized Women
- **Dafna Fund:** Design for Feminist Impact Laboratory
- **Mavoi Satum:** Helping Women Denied a Divorce

Fainy Sukeinik Escaped an Abusive Marriage, Then Founded an Organization to Help Other Haredi Women

Married at 22, Fainy Sukeinik raised three children and worked as a teacher while her husband studied Torah full-time. When her husband became abusive, she knew she had to leave her marriage. But her decision made her an outcast in her community: her employer threatened to fire her, and she was shunned by her neighbours. However, she had no desire to leave the Haredi world and was still committed to a devout Jewish practice.

So Fainy became active on social media and started blogging about divorce in the Haredi community for a women's online magazine. As she learned more about abusive relationships, Fainy realized that there was a need for more support for women in the Orthodox community. So she founded Ba'asher Telchi (translated literally as "Wherever You Go"), a Shatil-guided NGO that supports ultra-Orthodox women who are trying to get out of difficult marriages.

Fainy is achieving her goal, not only to help individual Haredi women, but also to fight the social stigma of abuse and divorce within the Orthodox community: "Thanks to our work with Shatil, what once felt overwhelming is now doable."





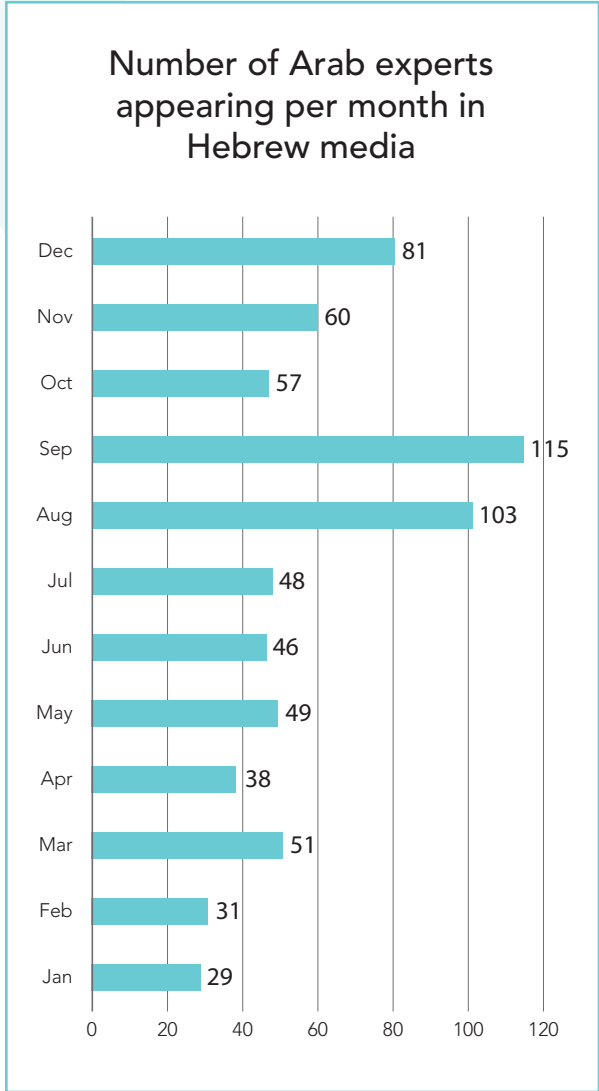
Civil and Human Rights

Dramatically Increased Arab Representation in Israeli Media

Over the past year, civil rights organization Sikkuy began a public awareness campaign to highlight the significant under-representation of Israeli Arabs on Israeli television and radio. A weekly "Representation Index," published in collaboration with media watchdog Seventh Eye and Ifat media research institute, compiles data from various media outlets, bringing attention to this imbalance.

While media outlets got the message, they needed help locating the experts. And so Sikkuy, together with social activist platform Anu, launched the A-List, an online searchable data base of Arab citizens who are subject experts.

The results of this campaign were dramatic and immediate: At the beginning of the year roughly 30 Arab experts appeared in the media each month. By the end of 2016 that number had more than tripled.



Israel is home to citizens from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds, many of whom are marginalized and socially disadvantaged because of their origins, beliefs, or ethnicity.

The New Israel Fund of Canada works to ensure that every Israeli, regardless of background or orientation, has the right to adequate housing, employment, infrastructure, and social services. We focus on counteracting systemic discrimination of vulnerable populations by educating students, teachers, social workers, and employers about the rights of the people they serve.

2016 Projects

- **Shatil:** Leadership for Shared Society
- **Shaharit:** Nurturing Community Leadership in Common Cause
- **Shatil:** Capacity Building for Refugee Organizations
- **Our HeritaGe:** Declaration of Democracy for Russian-Speaking Citizens
- **Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI):** Public Education for Human Rights
- **Adva Center:** Public Education for Social & Economic Rights
- **Sikkuy:** Increasing Arab Representation in the Media

Religious Pluralism and Tolerance

Religious pluralism and tolerance are increasingly being challenged in Israel, and issues of gender segregation and civil marriage continue to make headlines. Although 70% of Israel's population is non-Orthodox, Orthodox Judaism remains the only stream of Judaism recognized by the state. The ultra-Orthodox rabbinic courts control and regulate Israel's civil sphere on issues ranging from marriage to conversion to burial. As a result, many Israelis feel a sense of alienation and discrimination that is not conducive to fostering a strong Jewish identity.

The New Israel Fund of Canada funds programs that support Jews of all backgrounds and affiliations in connecting or reconnecting to their Judaism, promoting pluralistic Jewish values and shared society.

Some of our projects include:

- Helping immigrants from the former Soviet Union set up vibrant spiritual communities and discover their Jewish heritage.
- Training Orthodox women to find their voices in public spheres and increase their participation in Jewish ritual within the framework of *halacha* (Jewish law).
- Supporting young secular Israelis in combining the study of ancient Jewish texts with social action.
- Strengthening moderate voices within religious communities.



2016 Projects

- **Shaharit:** Nurturing Community Leadership in Common Cause
- **KIAH:** Memizrach Shemesh: Democratic Leadership Training from a Mizrahi Perspective
- **Shatil:** Training and Workshops
- **Shatil:** Capacity Building
- **Mavoi Satum:** Helping Women Denied a Divorce

Jewish and Bedouin Youth Share Traditional Food and Dance

Since 2000, Kol Yisrael Chaverim: Memizrach Shemesh, a House of Study and Center for Social Leadership, has been inspired by the language, texts, and stories of Mizrahi-Sephardic traditions to nurture social change in Israel. Rooted in the values of communal and social responsibility, Memizrach Shemesh cultivates leadership that creates social change in communities on Israel's geographic and social periphery. Every year, Memizrach Shemesh works with hundreds of participants to improve their communities and respond to extremism with a more inclusive and tolerant Judaism.

In 2016, Memizrach Shemesh held local *mimuna* festivals throughout the country to celebrate the end of Passover. One such event was held in Kseife, a Bedouin town in the south, not far from Beersheva. The *mimuna* was hosted by 20 Bedouin, with 20 Jewish youth in attendance. Together they made and ate traditional holiday foods, studied texts exploring the values associated with Passover, such as welcoming the stranger, friendship, and respecting differences. Afterwards they learned traditional dances from their two communities and ended the night with a drumming circle. The two groups left with a deeper understanding of each other and their respective religious and cultural experiences.

Social and Economic Justice

Shatil Brings Together Residents of Israeli and Palestinian Towns

Shatil's Leadership for Shared Society, creates a network of Palestinian and Jewish Israeli leaders who jointly spearhead projects to promote equality and shared society. In 2016, 40 writers, community leaders, city council members, and educators were accepted to the course to explore models for shared living.

One program brought the Jewish town of Givat Ela in the north closer to its neighbour, the Palestinian Israeli town of Ilut. While these communities had casual contact, there was a growing desire among residents for more organized interactions and increased mutual understanding.

With the help of NIFC's partner, Givat Haviva, these communities formed steering committees and met with local municipal governments with the goal of launching joint community initiatives and improving inter-community relations.

They started small, planning a joint walk in their beautiful shared surroundings. Their next step was to join the Shatil leadership course. Initially, residents expressed concerns about each other's cultural practices. For example, Israeli residents had some discomfort with the call of the muezzin. But the Shatil course persuaded the participants to choose collaboration over distrust.



Almost one in five Israelis live in households with an income that is less than half of the national median. Almost half of all primary school children in Israel live below the poverty line. Social and economic discrimination disproportionately affects Arab Israelis, Ethiopian and Mizrahi Jews, single parents, the elderly, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ community, and other minority groups. NIFC-supported programs have a mission to eradicate the root causes of poverty, injustice, and discrimination, and to create opportunities for all of Israel's citizens to access education, jobs, affordable housing, public services, and health care.

2016 Projects

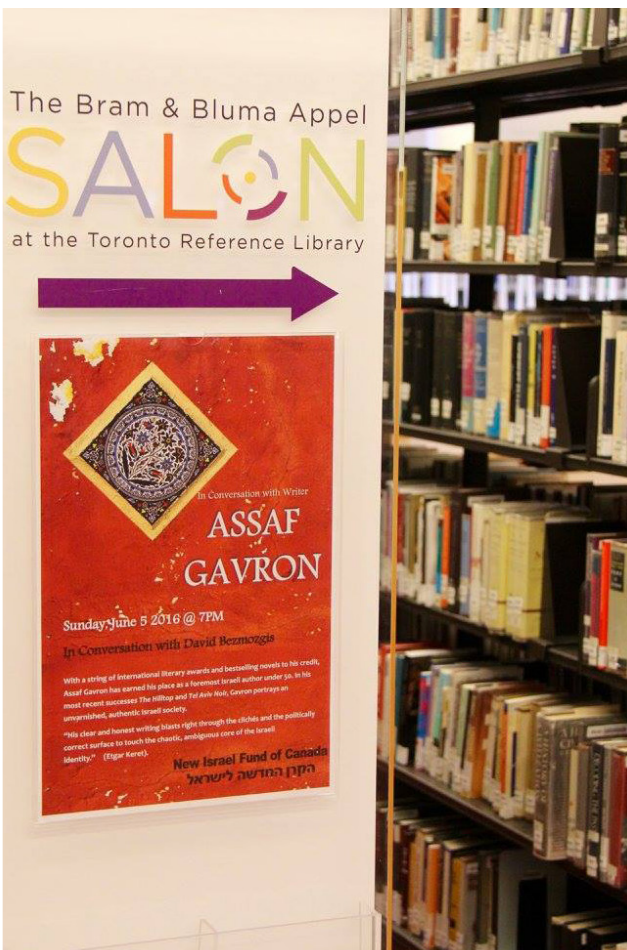
- **Shatil:** Leadership for Shared Society
- **Shatil:** Leadership Networks for Shared Society
- **Givat Haviva:** Zemer & Emek Hefer Shared Communities
- **Abraham Fund:** Media Project for Shared Society & Combatting Racism
- **Shaharit:** Nurturing Community Leadership in Common Cause
- **Memizrach Shemesh:** Democratic Leadership Training from a Mizrahi Perspective
- **Shatil:** Capacity Building for Refugee Organizations

Canadian Outreach and Education



The New Israel Fund of Canada hosts events throughout the year to promote a deeper understanding of the issues facing Israeli society and the work being done by our Israeli partners. Our discussions embrace diverse perspectives in our effort to encourage open dialogue and strengthen the connection between Israel and Jewish communities across Canada.





2016 Events in Canada

- Annual Shira Herzog Symposium featuring acclaimed Israeli author David Grossman; NIF CEO, Daniel Sokatch; feminist and human rights activist Nabila Espanioli; author Ayelet Tsabari; and Canadian journalist Jonathan Kay. Moderated by Senior Rabbi Yael Splansky.
- Israeli writer Assaf Gavron in discussion with Canadian writers, including writer and filmmaker David Bezmozgis.
- Israeli Film Night featuring *Grassroots in Dry Lands*, a Canadian film featuring activists in Israel, Palestine, and Jordan.
- NIFC presentations at Limmud learning festivals in Toronto and Ottawa.
- Events with Sharon Abraham-Weiss, Executive Director of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI).
- Shabbat dinners and Sukkot meetup for New Generations Canada.

Social Justice Fellowship

The NIFC Social Justice Fellowship engages young Canadians in the movement for social change in Israel, developing leaders committed to the development of a truly democratic Israeli society. The program gives college and university graduates the chance to spend 10 months in Israel working alongside leading Israeli non-governmental social-change organizations, where they can make a meaningful contribution while learning leadership skills.

The NIFC Social Justice Fellow for 2016-17 was Sam Winer, a recent graduate from McGill University with a degree in World Islamic and Middle Eastern studies and minors in Psychology and Religious Studies.

Sam has a strong interest in shared society projects and the role they play in strengthening multicultural values and complex thinking. During his college summers, Sam worked at a summer camp in Maine called Seeds of Peace, where teenagers from various conflict regions meet, live together, and have intensive dialogue sessions. He was able to bring the skills acquired from Seeds of Peace to his university campus, where he established and ran dialogue sessions for Jewish and Palestinian students. These were formative experiences for him in community organizing and non-traditional education.

Sam spent his time in Israel working with the Hand in Hand School in Jerusalem. Hand in Hand brings together thousands of Jews and Arabs from schools and communities throughout the country. He worked for their development and strategy team three days a week and tutored students within the school once a week. He also developed Hand in Hand's social media reach, led tours for potential donors and students, and helped plan a fundraising trip for Hand in Hand's CEO.

Back in Toronto, Sam is now the ShinShinim program coordinator at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. He continues to volunteer with New Israel Fund of Canada.



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